"I get paid for my American accent": the story of one Multilingual English Teacher (MET) in Japan

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The flourishing research being published in the Global Englishes paradigm is increasing awareness of how English is used as a global lingua franca in international contexts. Such research has a number of implications for the English Language Teaching (ELT) industry, particularly in Expanding Circle countries, such as Japan where English is no longer being learnt as a mere 'foreign' language. However, the Native English Speaker (NES) episteme continues to dominate and, despite increasing calls for curriculum change, including the employment of more Non-native English Speaking Teachers (NNESTs) or Multilingual English Teachers (METs), NESs continue to fill teaching positions worldwide, perpetuating stereotypes about 'correct' and 'standard' English. The current study investigates the implementation of curriculum change at the practical level, aiming to investigate the experiences of NNESTs teaching outside of their home context in Japan. Despite calls for the employment of such teachers, who may serve as better role models for students than a monolingual NES, little research has been conducted with NNESTs teaching outside of their home countries. This study aims to fill this gap. It is part of a larger study, which includes longitudinal data collection with several participants in different countries (*n=20*), including practicing and pre-service teachers, via interviews, diaries and focus groups. This article reports the first interview documenting the experience of one multilingual NNEST in Japan, who has been forced to take on a 'fake American' identity. This single narrative provides insights into the

experience of this teacher, highlighting the number of obstacles to implementing curriculum reform in the Japanese context. It provides preliminary insights into the identity of METs and the strategies they employ to maintain authority and legitimacy in the classroom.
Key words: English as a lingua franca, global Englishes, identity.

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1 Introduction

The increasing amount of research in the Global Englishes research paradigm has brought to the forefront the irrelevance of the Native English Speaker (NES) model in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), particularly for future English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) users. A number of proposals for changes to ELT practice have been suggested in recent years (cf. Galloway and Rose, in press), some of which include increased exposure to the global use of English, respect for multilingualism and a reconceptualisation of the concept of qualified English teachers. The current study focuses on one of these proposals that problematises current teacher hiring practices within ELT. Global Englishes research showcases how English is used as a worldwide lingua franca, revealing the various pragmatic strategies needed to successfully communicate in various communities of practice. Such research reveals that learners are not simply learning English to communicate solely with NESs, nor is such a model the only effective way to communicate. It has been suggested that Multilingual English Teachers (METs) (Kirkpatrick, 2009; 2012), or an "expert in ELF use" (House, 2003, p. 573), who have access to a useful multilingual repertoire, may provide a better role model for students than a monolingual NEST. It is important to point out that, while METs are often assumed to be NNESs, and while in this study the focus is on a NNES, a MET can also be a multilingual NES. The employment of such teachers, multilingual

NESs included, would also be more reflective of how the English language is used today and may also help eradicate the stereotype that it is only spoken by monolingual NESs and the stereotype that such speakers make the 'best' English teachers.

However, such a reconceptualisation of the notion of an 'ideal' English teacher may not be such a straightforward task. English teachers and institutions around the world who wish to adopt a Global Englishes perspective into their teaching practices face a number of barriers to implementing change (cf. Galloway and Rose, in press). A socially ingrained ideology of native English (NE) persists and pedagogical beliefs that English should be learnt from a NES remain strong, particularly in countries like Japan. As a traditional English as a 'foreign' language context, Japanese English teacher recruitment practices, driven by market forces, continue to bias NESs. It is undeniable that they may be profitable, but such employment practices perpetuate outdated stereotypes about both the English language and English teachers.

In order to investigate curriculum reform, the present study, presented at the 6th International Conference of English as a Lingua Franca, aims to investigate teacher recruitment practices and this attachment to 'standard' English in Japan to explore the possibility of curriculum reform in relation to Global Englishes. Through an investigation of the experiences and attitudes of one MET, it aims to contribute to scholarly discussion of Global Englishes related pedagogical concerns. It is part of a larger longitudinal study that looks at the experiences and attitudes of a number of METs (*n=20*), including pre-service and practicing teachers, in various countries, through interviews, dialogic diaries and focus groups over a two year period. It also forms part of a larger series of studies that seeks to investigate the implementation of the various proposals that have been put forward for ELT curriculum reform and explore the various barriers to innovation in ELT in the Japanese context (Galloway, 2011; 2013; Galloway and Rose, 2013; Galloway and Rose, 2014).

2 Literature review

2.1 The native English speaker in English language teaching

The NES episteme continues to dominate the ELT industry worldwide, giving such speakers a certain kind of legitimacy to teach the language. Such stereotypes are also related to race and, in Japan, English teaching job advertisements not only ask for 'native' English speaking applicants, but images of fair-haired Caucasian NESs dominate language school billboards and advertisements throughout the country.

The image that NE is 'correct' and 'standard', and that English is best learnt from NESs, is unfortunate, given the growing research within the Global Englishes paradigm. Japan, for example, is transitioning from an English as a 'foreign' language to an ELF context, with increased opportunities for the use of ELF internationally and domestically. Not only is the NES model irrelevant for future ELF users, but such stereotypes may also lead to negative attitudes and, therefore, may have negative consequences for ELF users. They may generate negative attitudes towards anything that deviates from the norm. Positive images of NESs may also negatively impact on students' own confidence in their own English ability.

2.2 The multilingual ELF user

The idealistic notion of the native English speaker as the best model and teacher in ELT has been increasingly questioned in recent years (figure 1). Despite the continued and frequent use of the terms 'native' and 'non-native', and the continued use of the NES as the yardstick of competence, it has become clear that such a simplistic distinction is problematic and there is no one definition to which everyone subscribes. A number of alternative terms have been proposed based on use and expertise. The use of such terms have also been criticised as being judgemental, suggesting that being a 'non' something means being deficient in some way. This cline of competence based on nativeness and labelling someone as a 'non' something is likely to have a negative

influence on the confidence of non-native speakers. ELF users do not lack something and need to be encouraged to see themselves, not as failed natives, but to see that their multilingual repertoire puts them in a rather advantageous position. The terms also imply homogeneity, yet NESs do not all speak a standardized and 'neutral' variety. The myth that NESs make the best English teachers has also been questioned in recent years, what Phillipson (1992) has termed the "native speaker fallacy" (p.185). The irrelevance of the NES norm is also evident with the growing awareness of Global Englishes, as it becomes increasingly clear that such an outdated norm cannot adequately prepare students for their future use of ELF. As Leung and Street (2012) note, "The unquestioned assumption that the language norms and practices associated with native-speaker varieties should be regarded as automatically relevant and legitimate has been considerably lessened" (p. 88).

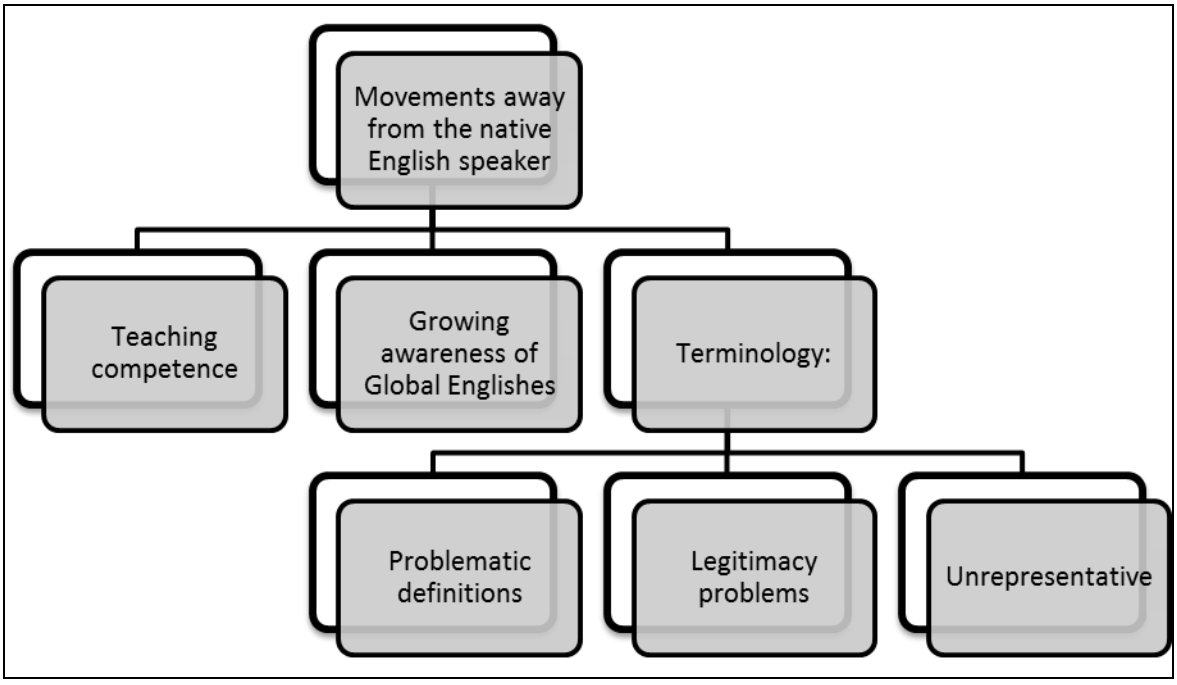

Figure 1: The demise of the native English speaker (Galloway and Rose, in press)

Thus, the NES norm and the native/non-native dichotomy has been challenged in the literature. In terms of recruitment practices, Selvi (2011) notes that "the ELT field is now moving towards a more encompassing 'both/and discourse' (i.e. NEST and NNEST)" (p.188). The international association Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) organisation has issued two 'position statements' (TESOL 1992; 2006) opposing such discrimination and the TESOL organisation's NNEST [Non-native English Speakers in TESOL] Interest section (http://nnest.asu.edu/), stemming from the NNEST Caucus in 1998, also shows the increasing attention being given to such discriminatory employment practices, at the scholarly level at least. "However, the tenet that the ideal teacher is the native speaker remains resilient, even in multilingual settings, where the major role of English is as a lingua franca" (Kirkpatrick, 2012, p.133). Multilingualism may be the norm, and as figure 1 shows, the dominance of the NES has been questioned in the literature, but the NES criterion holds strong. This is particularly true in the money-making world of the ELT industry. Bias towards NESs in recruitment decisions is often justified in relation to students' preferences and, although a lot of research does suggest that students prefer NESTs (Galloway, 2011; 2013; Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2005; Medgyes, 1994), students' attitudes are influenced by a number of factors, including the dominance of NE ideology and pedagogical beliefs about how the language should be learnt (Galloway, 2013).

2.3 Previous research

NNESTs have received a lot of attention in the literature (Braine, 1999; 2005; 2010; Kamhi-Stein, 2004; Llurda, 2005), and some researchers have focused on recruitment practices. Clark and Paran's (2007) questionnaire based study in the UK, for example, found that 72.3% of the 90 respondents responsible for hiring English teachers found the 'native speaker criterion' to be moderately, or very, important . Mahboob et al (2004) also looked at employers' attitudes towards the 'native speaker criterion' in America, concluding that it is a very important factor in recruitment decisions. Researchers have also examined the respective capacities of NNESTs and NESTs and

students' attitudes towards them (cf. Galloway, 2013). However, with the exception of Mahboob (2004), most studies focus on teachers that share the same mother tongue as their students. There have also been many studies on the self-perception and identity of NNESTs (Chen and Cheng, 2012; Kamhi-Stein, 2000; Lee, 2010; Llurda, 2005; Medgyes, 1992; 1994; Park, 2006; 2008; 2012; Pavlenko, 2003; Reis, 2011; Reves and Medgyes, 1994; Samimy and Brutt-Griffler, 1999), which reveal important insights into the self-perceptions of NNESTs, and which can help inform curriculum innovation. Amin's (1997) interviews with five female teachers, for example, revealed that teachers believe students prefer Caucasian NESs. Park's (2012) account of one Chinese TESOL student in the U.S. documents the journey she had to make to fully appreciate the uniqueness of not being a NES. These studies also suggest that NNESTs often experience a sense of insecurity, due to the lack of a NES status.

Thus, despite the changing sociolinguistic landscape of the English language, many NNESTs continue to struggle to see themselves as authorities of, or legitimate teachers of, the language. Subtirelu's (2011) case study with one NNEST provides interesting insights into how the teacher utilised a number of strategies to juggle this NNES status with the need to speak as an authority in the classroom. Similarly, Reis's (2011) examination of the development of a NNEST's professional identity also highlights how beliefs and attitudes towards the 'NES myth' are connected to professional identity and instructional practices.

3 An investigation into one teacher's experience as a NNEST in Japan

3.1 Research questions

The aim of the study is to collate experiences/stories of NNESTs/METs working around the world to explore the possibility of ELT curriculum reform in relation to employment

practices. It also aims to uncover the ways in which the ELT industry has contributed to reinforcing existing stereotypes about both English and English speakers. Despite the calls for the recruitment of more NNESTs and METs at the theoretical level in relation to Global Englishes, little research has been conducted with the teachers themselves, particularly those working outside of their home contexts. This study aims to explore how such teachers see themselves, how they construct their identities in the classroom and how they feel they are positioned by others. This generated three specific research questions:

1. What are the experiences of NNESTs working outside of their home contexts?
2. To what extent are their identities as English speakers and teachers influenced by their experiences teaching English?
3. What are their attitudes towards Global Englishes and its role in ELT?

At this exploratory stage of the research, only the first two research questions have been addressed. The third will be investigated in the diary-based approach and subsequent interviews. This study reports on the experience of one teacher working in the Japanese context.

3.2 The setting

The interview was conducted with one MET working at a prominent English language school in Tokyo, Japan. Being one of the largest commercial markets for English-language instruction in the world, Japan makes an interesting case study for the investigation of recruitment practices.

3.3 Participant profile

The participant, who has been given the name Natasha, is a female Eastern European NNEST, aged between 35 and 40 (Natasha's native country, place of work, age and

native language have not been revealed, to protect her anonymity). She began learning English at the age of 13, and speaks four languages fluently: her native language, Russian, Japanese and English. She currently uses English at work, with her English-speaking friends and also in her creative writing, Japanese at work and in her daily life, and her native language with family and friends. She studied in Japan for one year intervals on two separate occasions for her undergraduate degree and then returned to Japan full-time to pursue her graduate studies for six and a half years. She began teaching English in her home country on a part-time basis and then began teaching formally in Japan. She has been employed by her current school for six years. The participant was recruited, and interviewed by, Melanie Czarnecki, the author's co-researcher on this project.

3.4 Methods

In order to elicit substantive information about Natasha's attitudes and experiences, and give her the opportunity to discuss her experiences in depth, clarify, extend and provide examples, a narrative inquiry approach was used. Natasha was positioned as a narrator and this biographical method enabled us to get to know her better and listen to her 'told story'. "Through narrative inquiry, NNESTs can start to make sense of their professional landscape, challenge disempowering ideologies and identify as legitimate TESOL professionals" (Reis, 2011, p.155), and, therefore, this method was also chosen to empower Natasha. The second part of the interview utilised a semi-structured interview guide, to ensure consistency with future interviews. She was offered the choice of using English or Japanese, but chose to conduct the interview in English. The series of data collection is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Series of data collection for participant 1

Stage	Date	Instrument	Time
1	June,2013	Interview 1	2 hours
2	Six months (September, 2013 to February, 2014)	E-journal (Semi-structured) (written or voice recording)	Weekly
3	December, 2014	Interview 2	1 hour +
4	Six months (March, 2014 to August, 2014)	E-journal	Weekly
5	June, 2014	Interview 3	1 hour +

3.5 Data analysis

The interview was firstly transcribed, checked for consistency and then analysed to look for key segments, concepts, themes, events and topical markers. Codes were identified through a mixture of concept-driven coding and data-driven coding and short descriptions were written. Several patterns emerged and the codes were categorised under a smaller number of themes into hierarchies. The thematic framework is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Thematic framework

Conditional favouritism: The NEST/NNEST dichotomy
Privileged foreign status
Discriminatory practice and unprofessional favouritism
Hierarchical Divide: Ethnicity and Race
Acceptance/justification of engagement in hegemonic practice
Students' needs and desires
Negotiating acceptance of the policy
Inferiority complex
Identity as a language expert to maintain authority

3.6 Limitations

The first limitation relates to the fact that both researchers are visibly Caucasian NESs, creating a clear relationship of unequal power. Nevertheless, the single setting ensured familiarity with the context and both researchers have lived and worked in Japan for a number of years, putting them in a more readily accepted position than that of an unknown researcher. The methodology also sought to empower Natasha. Participant selection may have also influenced the data, although mass recruitment of participants was not possible, due to the sensitive nature of the topic. The single setting and use of one participant are also clearly problematic, although we aim to provide enough detail about our participant to allow another researcher to make comparisons.

4 Results

The results below are presented according to the themes that emerged, as shown in Table 2.

4.1 Conditional favouritism: The NESTs/NNESTs dichotomy

4.1.1 Privileged foreign status

The first theme identified was conditional favouritism. Natasha originally applied for the assistant manager position, due to her Japanese skills, but was offered a position as an English teacher. When she telephoned, "they were like, 'Oh, a foreign person, we need teachers'. So they hired me". Natasha's non-Japanese status clearly put her in a privileged position to obtain an English teaching position.

4.1.2 Discriminatory practice and unprofessional favouritism

However, despite being 'privileged' for being foreign, her NNES status led to discriminatory employment practices. When she approached the topic of visa sponsorship, she was informed that "they couldn't do it cause I wasn't a native". This unethical treatment was further evidenced by the fact that she was requested to conceal her nationality. When she first arrived in Japan, "of course lots of people um assumed I'm from the United States cause I'm white", suggesting that the language school has a stereotypical image of an 'English speaker', which is also related to race. Her employers seized this opportunity to have someone that 'looks like' a NES, but went further, by asking her to pretend she was. She was asked "to change my name" and "tell my students I was from an English speaking country". She was "able to pick" and "picked the United States because it's big", pointing out that she was less likely to be

questioned about it, since "Everybody thinks they know a lot about the United States, so they don't ask lots of questions". Thus, in order to get the job, Natasha had "to change my nationality, I had to change my name". The NES criterion is clearly important for this language school.

Further discrimination and marginality is found in her fear that she will be found out, and she notes that she fears being rendered voiceless if she is 'caught'. She notes that she is "dreading" the day she is found out, although she adds, "Well, I'm not dreading that day really. Ya, I didn't do anything wrong. Well, I did. Oh, I don't know. Anyway, it's scary", suggesting that she is, internally, struggling with the ethical implications of her assumed identity. She discusses an experience where she taught a police offer, who could have asked to see her passport, and feared that the company would, perhaps, deny knowing her true nationality.

4.1.3 Hierarchical Divide: Ethnicity and Race

Natasha's discussion of the treatment of her colleagues provides further insights into the employment practices of the language school, and reveals that a hierarchy exists. She estimates that around 40% of the teachers are NNESTs, and that the number from the Philippines is increasing, but they "do not have to assume an American identity". Her Scandinavian colleague also "didn't have to pretend anything", even though "everybody knew he was from Scandinavia", suggesting that her employers may see Scandinavian English teachers as being more 'native-like', or that a cline of 'nativeness' exists. She also discussed the "strong segregation of Japanese and foreign teachers", and noted Japanese teachers have to work longer for less money, suggesting that they are at the bottom of this hierarchy.

In this language school, America is placed firmly at the top. There is a "strange policy" that requires teachers to acquire "an American accent", which is synonymous with an "eiken accent", the accent used on CDs for the popular Japanese English proficiency test. However, Natasha displays ambivalence about this yardstick of competence, noting "Well, five dollars says there is no such thing as an eiken accent (laughing)". Her employers disagree, using this as a yardstick to measure teachers' proficiency. Her New Zealand colleague, "who is perfectly native…..has been told that his accent is wrong", her Jamaican colleague, who worked as a teacher trainer and "was one of the only two teachers they had who actually had a teaching certificate", was also told that her "accent is not right" and her French-Canadian colleague was also told that "his accent is bad", because French was his first language. However, Natasha, who also feared losing her job, was told that "your accent is ok", which confused her, particularly since the new clause in her contract states that "your accent should be close to the eiken accent". It would seem, then, that Natasha's employers have an 'ideal' NES, and Natasha seems to fit this 'ideal', regardless of her nationality. However, her own ambivalence about such norms of reference is further evident when she talks about her Peruvian-American colleague, born in Peru, but raised in the United States. Although he has "an accent", Natasha states that "there is no such thing as a wrong accent" and points out the variation and "lots of accents in the United States" and, therefore, this requirement "is just something they pulled out of their asses, I don't know." For her, these are "unreasonable expectations…And I don't think the students care". Thus, the language school clearly believes in the necessity and superiority of the NES criterion, but Natasha remains ambivalent.

Natasha's discussion of her colleagues also suggests that race plays an important factor in stereotypes about English speakers. For example, her Philippino colleague, who "looked Indian", had an accent similar to "what black Americans have, because her partner is a black American". Natasha noted her popularity with the students, yet "one

of the mothers complained about her accent and the mother herself was Chinese". Although the manager, who Natasha described as being "Americanised", because he has lived in the United States for some time, supported the teacher and said that "her accent is not a problem, there are many English accents", "the company didn't like the teacher so they told her it wasn't about her accent, it was about her grammar, that was the problem. And they required her to take a TOEIC test….So she also got pissed off and left". These comments suggest that stereotypical images of NESs are also related to race.

4.2 Acceptance/justification of engagement in hegemonic practice

The discussion of her 'fake American' identity shows that Natasha accepts this to a certain extent. She comments that, "I'm used to it. I don't care that much. It doesn't feel good. I don't think it's, not on the ethical grounds, well whatever, my opinion is whatever, I'm fine". She discusses this hegemonic practice in terms of her students' needs and desires and, also, appears to employ various coping mechanisms, discussed below.

4.2.1 Students' needs and desires

When asked about taking on this identity, Natasha notes that

> business is mostly smoke and mirrors and they don't really care about English itself, they care about customer satisfaction, so what the customer says has to be right. If the customer says "you have a wrong accent," because they can't understand you, it's not them, it's you. If the customer says, "Oh no, I don't want a black teacher, I want a white teacher," then the customer needs to be satisfied.

She is aware that language schools are money making institutions and that employing a NES can mean big business, suggesting that they are more focused on profit than on teaching "English", as she points out. However, she adds that "it's not fair" and "promotes a false view of the world, because students think that there is only one kind of country in the world". She adds that "the concept that your teacher could be from a non-English speaking country, could be as non-native as you are, is something they just can't grasp". Thus, Natasha is aware that this stereotype is deeply ingrained in the minds of her students, the consumers. Asian teachers are often confused as being Japanese, "but when the teacher is black or white, they almost always assume that it is an American" and younger students "just divide the world into Japan and foreign countries and foreign countries means the United States".

4.2.2 Negotiating acceptance of the policy

Natasha's adult students, however, sometimes ask questions about the United States. When responding, she notes, "I basically tell them, Please turn around. There is a map on the wall. Can you see how big the United States is? There is no one answer to your question." She points out that "It's a big country. It's complicated". She seems to be comfortable with avoiding direct questions about America, and also notes that her colleagues mostly "don't care".

4.3 Inferiority complex

Despite her ambivalence towards NES norms, Natasha compares her own English to the NES yardstick on several occasions, suggesting that she feels inferior in some way. She notes that other language schools in Japan may also require her to take on this identity "Because the clients want natives, not strange people". However, such a

comparison may also be because of the dominance of the NES episteme in Japan, as well as the discriminatory employment practices that she has been subjected to. When asked if assuming this fake identity has influenced her identity as an English speaker, she notes that "I don't feel worse, I feel better, because, as you can probably tell from my accent right now, I make mistakes a lot". She repeats this, noting that, "you can tell I'm not native. People can tell I'm not native. But my students can't. And some of my co-workers can't". This makes her "feel very good. Plus, I don't really like this job and I'm happy that it's not me who is teaching. Who is this … *(American name)* person? Who is she? So, actually no I'm fine, I'm good." This fake identity, then, makes her feel good about her English and also enables her to bear a job that she does not like.

4.4 Identity as a Language expert to maintain authority

However, Natasha is aware of the benefit of being a NNEST and creates an identity as a language expert. This is perhaps to maintain some kind of legitimacy, or perhaps authority with her students. Despite having "never been to any English speaking country", "in like writing, spelling, I'm better than many of my co-workers". She points out that, "I think it doesn't matter if the teacher is a native or non-native". However, she does feel "a little bit ashamed", because she does not like lying to her students and would like to be honest with them and tell them that "You know guys, my English is not so good, but you would be able to speak English as well as I, or as bad as I, if you study, because I'm not a native speaker, just like you", suggesting that revealing her true identity would have a motivating influence on her students.

When asked about important teacher qualities, she did not mention nationality, or nativeness, but that teachers should have experience learning another language and feels that employing NNESTs would "offer them the perspective that nothing is what it

seems". Natasha adds that "non-native speakers know what is really difficult about English grammar or what is difficult to master" and that "being a bilingual or multilingual teacher helps to understand what kind of challenges or difficulties the students might be facing". While many of her "native co-workers are just frustrated that their students can't answer this or that", her non-native colleagues "try to find a way to help students understand". She adds that it is very "important" to raise learners' awareness "that a non-native person can learn English as well" and describes an experience with a mentally challenged child, who was "really impressed by my Japanese", which motivated him to study English. Her Japanese proficiency is something that she mentions often, and she thinks that it is a myth that students desire monolingual NESs. Her employers enforce an English-only policy and her use of Japanese in the classroom has been criticised. She believes that students' understanding should be key and points out the borrowings in the English language from other languages, showing her awareness of language variation and change. For her, "languages are not separate entities, people need to realize that." Thus, she is fairly confident about her MET status, and, particularly, her fluency in Japanese that gives her a certain kind of credibility or legitimacy in the classroom.

5 Discussion

5.1 Research Question 1: What are the experiences of NNESTs working outside of their home contexts?

This first exploratory interview with Natasha provides some preliminary insights into the experiences of NNESTs/METs working in language schools in Japan. Her experience shows that, at first, it may seem that they are privileged in a way for being non-Japanese, being able to secure English language teaching jobs, simply for being 'foreign'. Image is clearly important, yet being a NNEST also resulted in unprofessional

favouritism towards the NES (Medgyes, 2001) and unfair employment discrimination (Selvi, 2010). She was not only denied visa sponsorship twice, because of her NNES status, showing that, in her case at least, NNESTs are often afforded a lower professional status than their native counterparts (Mahboob, 2010), but the NES episteme is strong and she was even required to 'pretend' to be a NEST.

Thus, despite advancements in the field of Global Englishes, and proposals for a reconceptualization of the notion of qualified English teachers, alongside proposals for the recruitment of more METS, Natasha's case highlights the continuing dominance of NES ideology within the commercial ELT industry. It is assumed that students, the consumers, want NESTs and the language school has tried to create an identity that will be accepted by the students. Natasha, however, is aware of the problems of such stereotypes, and also that being a MET may be more beneficial for students.

Her experiences also shed light on the image of the English speaker in Japan, and suggest that there is, in fact, a hierarchical divide based on race and ethnicity. Stories of the discrimination her colleagues have faced, and the fact that only some NNESTs are required to conceal their true identity, suggest that there is some kind of cline of 'nativeness' in the language school. However, while being a NNES means that she cannot get visa sponsorship, Natasha's job appears to be 'safe', since her accent seems to fit that of an 'ideal' English speaker. The language school appears to have created an image of an 'ideal' NES, and Natasha seems to fit this image well.

Amin (1997) notes that students often relate 'nativeness' to 'whiteness'. Natasha's discussion of her colleague from the Philippines shows how race, as well as parents' attitudes, can be an important factor in the decision making process. Language schools are concerned with profits and students' and parents' attitudes and beliefs are clearly important.

5.2 Research Question 2: To what extent are their identities as English speakers and teachers influenced by their experiences teaching English?

McLaren (2003, p. 76) states that hegemony is a "maintenance of domination not by the sheer exercise of force but primarily through consensual social practices (i.e., what people say and do), social forms and social structures produced in specific sites such as the …school". Natasha, who is in a rather powerless position, shows evidence of accepting the language school's policy. She may not agree with it, but she knowingly accepts this fake identity and also justifies it in many ways, which is similar to the acceptance shown by the participant in Park's (2012) study, where the teacher did not agree with teaching to the test, but "both knowingly and unknowingly participated in this oppressive situation…because it was the normative practice in her educational context" (Park, 2012, p. 135). Natasha relates this to students' demands and their image of the ideal NES and 'teacher' and the profit-making nature of the language school business. She believes that "it promotes a false view of the world", showing her awareness that English is a global language spoken worldwide. Galloway's (2013) study showed that students' favourable attitudes towards NE come from the dominance of NE ideology and also that learning 'standard English' creates the stereotype that all other varieties are inferior and unintelligible and that communication can only be achieved through acquiring NE proficiency. Natasha also notes this, pointing out that students believe English speakers to be synonymous with Americans. The continued perpetuation of such a stereotype means that it will be further ingrained in the students' minds, and it is clearly something that has to be addressed. American English is clearly given a high status in Japan, which results in demands for American English and American teachers. This supports previous research that students prefer NESTs (e.g. Galloway, 2011; 2013), but these studies also showed that exposure to Global Englishes related issues through a Global Englishes course influenced such attitudes. Perceptions that English teachers must be NESs must be eradicated.

Identity is a complex and constantly negotiated construct, influenced by a number of factors. In Natasha's case, the dominance of NES episteme, the discriminatory employment practices and the perceived attitude of the students may have influenced her identity as a legitimate English speaker and teacher. In order to position herself as a legitimate and credible language teacher, Natasha constructs an identity as a language expert. In addition to juggling this quest for legitimacy, she also employs various strategies to cope with this fake American identity. As Park (2012) points out, many NNESTs may perceive a deficit in their English proficiency, due to not sounding like NESs (Jenkins, 2015; Kamhi-Stein, 2004). Rajagopalan's (2005) NNEST participants also displayed an "inferiority complex", stemming from beliefs about the NES norm. Cook (1999) also notes that such a comparison leads to a feeling of deficiency. Braine (1999) documents his own teaching experiences, where he suffered threats to his authority and credibility from students because of his NNES status, and Bernat (2009) suggests that the dominance of NES ideology can cause NNESTs to suffer from the 'impostor' syndrome. Natasha, however, perhaps because her students are under the illusion that she is a NEST, does not experience this. Being seen as a NEST gives her credibility in the classroom, although she is very much aware that this does not allow her to share her potentially motivating MET status with her students. She feels superior to her NEST colleagues and is confident in the usefulness of her Japanese skills. She is also aware that this fake identity prevents her from utilising the many advantages she has over a monolingual NEST. This is unfortunate given that her own experience learning the language, as with other NNESTs, makes her more qualified to help her students acquire the language (Jenkins, 2000). Natasha also notes this advantage and feels that knowledge of the language learning process is an important quality for an English teacher. Thus, while Kamhi-Stein (2000) notes that NNESTS may have lower confidence and self-perceived challenges to professional competence, self-perceived language needs and self-perceived prejudice, based on ethnicity or NNES status,

Natasha appears to be fairly confident, primarily due to her Japanese proficiency. She may not be a NES, but she is a multilingual, fluent in the students' first language.

Natasha positions herself as a language expert, recognising the strengths afforded her multilingual repertoire. However, she does measure herself against the NES yardstick at several points in the interview and also implies that she does, in fact, like being classed as a NES. Thus, in a sense, she has not fully achieved Cook's (1999) multicompetent state of mind, in that she compares herself with a NES. Thus, as with the participant in Reis's (2011) study, Natasha's professional identity "as a legitimate NNEST is filled with tensions and contradictions" (Reis, 2011, p.154).

6 Conclusion

The focus of this small-scale exploratory study has been on Natasha. While her narrative is unique, it does illustrate the experience of one MET working within the commercial ELT industry in Japan, raising awareness about employment practices and the issues that confront METs like her. Claims cannot be made from such a small-scale study, yet Natasha's narrative does provide further insights and directions for further research.

Firstly, while there are many reasons to move away from the superiority of NES norms, current ELT practice, in Natasha's case at least, does not make this an easy task. Having two or more languages is a useful resource and METS should be given the opportunity to see themselves as legitimate teachers of a language that has now become a global lingua franca used by more non-native speakers than native speakers. This has numerous implications for teacher education programs, and Natasha's case suggests that there are various strategies that can be adopted in the classroom to help achieve this sense of legitimacy. While they may not have the privileged NES status, but these

teachers should be encouraged to see themselves as language experts and experienced language learners, who can bring something valuable to the classroom. Native speaker proficiency and teaching ability do not go hand in hand, and it is imperative that teacher education programmes raise awareness of the global use of English today, as well as the valuable nature of having a multilingual repertoire.

Narratives such as Natasha's may also be a useful teaching tool, for future teachers to explore, examine and draw connections with their own experiences. Pavlenko (2003) and Golombek and Jordan (2005) note the positive influence that exposing Masters of TESOL students to Global Englishes theories can have on their self-confidence, and teacher training programmes need to encourage teachers to engage with such alternative discourses and challenge the dominating ideologies in the ELT industry. As Reis (2011) notes,

> while identities are often imposed, they can also be disputed, negotiated and asserted. The need to support NNESTs as they enter the TESOL profession should be clear. As language teacher educators, we must create systematic opportunities for TESOL professionals to critically reflect on their practice (p.156).

Thus, in the larger study, participants include practising teachers in various contexts around the world, as well as MSc TESOL pre-service teachers taking a Global Englishes component, to investigate the possible influence this may have on their identity as both an English speaker and an English teacher. These teachers will also be 'tracked' into their future English teaching careers to explore the possibility of ELT curriculum reform in their respective contexts. Natasha's experience has revealed that despite movements in the field, as well as two 'position statements' (TESOL 1992; 2006) opposing such discriminatory employment practices, the NES episteme holds strong. Macro-level change that includes more inclusionary employment practices may take some time and, as Seargeant (2009), notes, "If the image of academic excellence appeals and is

believable, it is probably of little concern how orthodox or effective it is" (p.95). Students' and parents' attitudes are clearly important and it would seem that before macro-level change can be initiated, we should start at the micro-level and aim to explore attitudes and identities and the possible influence of raised awareness of Global Englishes.

Further research is clearly needed. However, this exploratory narrative inquiry with Natasha has provided a number of insights for future directions. Her narrative has highlighted the importance of race and, therefore, the larger study will also include non-white NNESTs with double minority status. The overall goal is to contribute towards curriculum development and the movement towards the employment of more METs.

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